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# INTERROGATION REPORT

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SOURCE:

## SUMMARY

3.3(h)(2)

Prior to infiltration, a Battalion Party Congress was held to study the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-infiltration course and to evaluate the achievements of this training. At that time, a new Party Committee was elected. In each company there was a Party Chapter and, in the platoons, party cells. Each company also had an Inter-Youth Group Chapter and the platoons also had Group Chapters; these groups served to prepare soldiers

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None

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for eventual membership in the LAO DONG Party. The probationary period for membership in the LAO DONG Party was nine months for poor and lower middle class farmers and for workers; for upper middle class farmers and the other classes, the probationary period was one year. From the latter classes, only about 10 percent would be accepted into the Party.

1. Prior to the infiltration, a Battalion Party Congress was held to view the strengths and weaknesses of the pre-infiltration course and to evaluate the achievements of this training. After that the participants, including all of the Party members in the battalion, selected a new Party Committee which would have the responsibility of setting up the policies, functions and operations of the battalion. During this occasion, a Regimental Committee member addressed to the participants and urged them to fulfill their assignments with enthusiasm.
2. Although the term "election" was used for every occasion in the LAO DONG Party organization in Battalion 140, it however, was not much different from a nomination. For instance, in the election of a new Party Committee, it was the former Party Committee members themselves who proposed that the participants elect them. Also, the procedures were set up in such a way that no one else but the former Party Committee would be elected.
3. In NVN, the term of a Party Committee was six months, but in SVN a comparatively flexible procedure was applied in keeping with the war situation. After being elected, this new Party Committee would hold a meeting to discuss the points which had been unanimously approved by the congress. The main points can be summarized as the battalion policies, functions and operation. On this occasion they would also dwell upon the method of keeping soldiers from desertion and from engaging with the enemy forces during the infiltration.

#### ORGANIZATION

4. The LAO DONG Party organization of Battalion 140 can be broken down as follows:
  - a. The symbolic highest party level in the battalion is the Battalion Party (DANG BO) which represents all of the Party members in the battalion. In NVN the Battalion Party would hold a meeting every six months. Although in the highest position, it does not directly carry out the directives from the higher level. It is the Party Committee that has the responsibility of executing all the directives.
  - b. The Battalion Party Committee is elected during a Battalion Party Congress to carry out all of the Party policies and directives. The secretary of the Battalion Party Committee was Captain TRAN VAN HANH who was concurrently the Battalion Political officer; the Assistant Secretary was NGUYEN VAN MIEN, the Battalion Commander; the Party Committee members were Captain TRAN VAN HIEN, the Assistant Political officer; Captain LE TRUNG UY, the Chief-of-Staff; Senior Lieutenant HO, the Political officer of Company 1; and Senior Lieutenant LOC, the Political officer of Company 2; (names of the other two company political officers unknown). The Party Committee held meetings once monthly whenever convenient on a resting day.
5. In each company, there was one Party Chapter. The Party Chapters would hold meetings twice monthly to develop and carry out the resolutions set up by the Battalion Party Committee. It would also disseminate such resolutions to all Party members and Youth Group members so that they all could understand their roles clearly. During the semi-monthly meeting,

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the Party Chapter would view the past operation of the battalion in order to gain experience from it. In all meetings of the Party Chapter, both the official and probationary Party members were allowed to attend, but only the official Party members would be authorized to vote. The probationary members, however, had the right to voice opinions.

6. In each platoon, there was one Party cell whose functions were to guide the Youth Group. The majority of Party Cell leaders were platoon leaders. In case a platoon leader was not a Party member, then a Party long-time member would usually serve as a Cell Leader in that in that platoon. If this was the case, every time the cell leader had a new instruction from the Party Chapter, the would in turn pass it on to the Platoon leader. The Cell Leader was assigned by the Party Committee.
7. In addition, in each company there existed one Inter-Youth Group Chapter, and in each platoon one Group Chapter. The Inter-Group Chapter Secretary was the Assistant Company Political Officer and the Group Chapter Secretary was the Assistant Platoon Leader, who was not necessarily a Party member but had to be the Assistant Platoon Leader. The Youth Group organization in the NVA was a form of political and ideological indoctrination for the soldiers who would eventually join the LAO LONG Party. Sometimes a few group members openly refused to join the LAO LONG Party, because they did not like to be tied to any political affiliation.
8. Theoretically, the Party organization in a military unit would cope with the political sphere only, but in reality, it controlled all fields of activity such as military, politics and administration. It was the Political Officers and also the LAO LONG Party members who observed, guided, indoctrinated, motivated, promoted and urged all the other members in the unit to make efforts in fulfilling their assignments. The leadership, organization and execution of all the policies were always under LAO LONG Party control. The majority of military men preferred joining the LAO LONG in the hope that they would be granted more privileges. An enlisted man hoped that he would be sent to an officer training course; in this case, before he was sent to the course he would be automatically promoted to Corporal. Whereas an officer hoped that he would receive promotion quicker than the others. In general, it was the interests and privileges that attracted them to become LAO LONG Party members.

## PROCEDURES OF ADMISSION

9. [redacted] he did not know much about the Party articles and regulations. He, however, learned that basically a prospective member must study 10 responsibilities of a Party member contained the LAO LONG Party regulation book. Yet, operational requirements compelled them to apply such regulations in the simplest manner. For instance, in Source's case he never knew what the 10 responsibilities were about.

3.3(h)(2)

10. [redacted] The procedures of admission to the LAO LONG Party were as follows:

3.3(h)(2)

- a. Basic classes: Poor and lower middle farmers, and workers (the period from probationary to official member was nine months). The majority of these classes were admitted to the LAO LONG Party. Of the upper middle farmers (almost considered a rich farmer) and other classes, about 10 percent would be accepted; the period from probationary to official member was 12 months, instead of nine.

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In order to become Party members, the latter classes had to work really hard to reach the standards.

- b. Applicants must have spotless records through the investigation of the local authorities; must have struggle achievements. In peace time, the investigation could prolong from one to two years, but during war time it usually took six months before the applicant became a probationary member.
  - c. The personal data must be made by the applicant himself so that the Party Cell can make a cross check to see if it agreed with the investigation result of the local authorities. If the Party Cell does not satisfy with the personal data prepared by the applicant, it would ask him to do again.
  - d. After the Party Cell approved, it would forward the whole file of a prospective Party member to the Party Chapter for approval. A vote would be held by the Party Chapter to see if all of its members agreed. After that the file would be forwarded to the Party Committee for final approval. Date of Party membership is counted from the day the applicant's personal document was signed by the Party Committee. (Source said that although the procedures of forwarding applicants' documents had to flow from the lower level to the higher, actually such documents had been gone through by the Party Committee first).
  - e. When all the paper work was finished, a ceremony would be organized by the Party Committee to officially announce the admission of a new member. On this occasion, the applicant would read his application asking to be accepted as a Party member. Then the two Party members who introduced him would guarantee his conduct and behavior before the participants. Finally the Secretary of Battalion Party Committee would read the letter of decision to admit the applicant as a Party member.
11. After the probationary period, if the probationary Party member committed no mistake, he would write a self-criticism, dealing with the strengths and weaknesses that he had experienced during the past nine months. This statement would be examined by the Party Chapter first, before it was forwarded to the Party Committee for final approval. If it was approved, he would become an official member. The announcement of Party membership was usually made public during a convenient regular Party committee meeting.

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